



**Chairmanship of the Czech Republic**  
Council of Europe  
May – November 2017

**Présidence de la République tchèque**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Mai – Novembre 2017

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

28 September 2017

DGII/EDU/CIT(2017)10

Learning to Live Together:  
a Shared Commitment to Democracy  
Conference on the Future of Citizenship  
and Human Rights Education in Europe  
Strasbourg, 20 – 22 June 2017

---

## General Report

---

## Acknowledgements

The present conference report was prepared for the Council of Europe by Ana Perona, Executive Director of The European Wergeland Centre in Oslo, Norway.

The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) is a resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship. Its work builds on the Council of Europe recommendations and policies, such as the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, which was developed to make sure that the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law are promoted in and through education.

The EWC's main aim is to strengthen the capacity of individuals, educational institutions and educational systems to build and sustain a culture of democracy and human rights. It was established by the Council of Europe and Norway in 2008 and serves all 47 member states. The EWC is governed by a board composed of representatives of the Council of Europe and Norway.

# Table of Contents

Executive summary	4
A: Introduction: conference context	5
B. Putting learners at the centre of education: findings, discussions and recommendations	8
I. Policy	
Key action 1: Include EDC/HRE in national, regional and local policy and practices for formal and non-formal education including youth work	9
II. Implementation	
Key action 2: Ensure quality, balanced provision of EDC/HRE in all areas and types of education, with specific attention paid to areas where EDC/HRE is less present such as pre-school education, vocational education and training, and higher education	12
Key action 3: Recognise the value and strengthen the capacity of education professionals and educators in civil society , and empower them through training and other support	16
III. Co-operation	
Key action 4 - Strengthen the commitment of, and co-operation, co-ordination and shared ownership between public authorities, national human rights institutions and civil society, including through public debate and consultations involving, amongst others, youth and student organisations, in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practices regarding EDC/HRE	19
IV. Access, visibility and relevance	
Key action 5 - Ensure access to EDC/HRE, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups, including young people who are not in education or training	22
	3

Key action 6 - Increase the visibility of the Charter amongst all current and potential stakeholders, including examples of how it can be implemented, through awareness-raising, advocacy, relevant policy measures, capacity building and other targeted initiatives.	25
Key action 7: Collect and promote examples of learning practice illustrating the relevance of EDC/HRE to everyday life, with particular attention given to the experiences of vulnerable and marginalised groups	27
V. Assessment, evaluation and research	
Key action 8: Consistently integrate EDC/HRE in curricula, and develop appropriate programme and process evaluation and assessment tools	29
Key action 9: Make full use of available data and support systematic evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of EDC/HRE programmes	32
Key action 10: Develop partnerships with higher education institutions, research institutes and other relevant organisations to develop and promote research in this area	34
C. Viewpoints: promoting human rights and democracy through education in Europe today	
	34
D. International institutions' perspective: supporting progress towards common objectives on citizenship and human rights education	
	35
E. Conference closing remarks	
	36

## Executive Summary

Over 400 representatives of public authorities, education institutions and civil society organisations took part in the conference on the Future of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe in Strasbourg on 20-22 June 2017. The conference was organised in the framework of the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

The aim of the conference was to explore how the Council of Europe Charter on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7) can be further strengthened as an effective support tool for building democratic societies based on respect for human rights.

The participants discussed how the conclusions of the Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe (in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Charter) related to their own experiences; shared examples of good practice; and proposed recommendations for future action. The outcomes of this discussion were then captured in the “Declaration, Key Actions and Expected Outcomes on Education for democratic citizenship and human rights”.

The present report provides an overview of the conference discussions, based on the structure of the above-mentioned Declaration, and provides substantial clarification on the rationale behind the actions and outcomes that it contains. The main conference conclusions included the following:

- Europe is facing serious challenges to democracy and human rights. Education has an important role to play in addressing these challenges. The Council of Europe should undertake a stronger political and strategic leadership in this area.
- While there are a broad variety of contexts in the member states for education for democratic citizenship and human rights, it is essential to have a shared understanding of strategic goals in this area. The Council of Europe should provide a platform for systematic collection of good practice, on-going definition of quality criteria and development of recommendations for future action. It should support its member states in making progress towards these goals, in accordance with their respective needs and priorities.

➡ There exist significant differences in the perceptions with respect to the obstacles for the development of EDC/HRE between public authorities and civil society organisations. On-going public debate and broad and inclusive consultations on relevant education policy and practice are essential for overcoming such obstacles.

➡ A shared ownership of democratic societies and a sense of belonging are crucial for peace and security in Europe and in the world. It is therefore important to pay particular attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups and to address the issue of unequal access to citizenship and human rights education.

➡ More progress is needed in general education and it must remain a priority area. Further efforts need to be made in the areas of higher education, pre-school education and vocational education and training, where education for democratic citizenship and human rights has not been sufficiently present so far.

➡ Capacity building for education professionals is of crucial importance and should be given more attention in the next review cycle of the Charter. Synergies between formal and non-formal education sectors are essential for improving quality and sustainability of this work.

➡ Education for democratic citizenship and human rights is of direct relevance for everyday life. It is essential to connect it to specific needs of each category of learners. It should not be added on top of what they need to learn, but should be integrated in the development of the essential competences.

➡ The Council of Europe Charter on citizenship and human rights education and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture are useful tools for policy dialogue and development, as well as for lobbying and advocacy. Their inter-relation needs to be further developed.

➡ The Council of Europe should strengthen its regional leadership in promoting synergies among international institutions in the area of education for democratic citizenship and human rights, in particular in the framework of the UN Agenda 2030.

The conclusions of the conference will be presented to relevant decision making bodies within the Council of Europe, and will be used for the implementation of the programme of activities 2018-2019.

## A. Introduction: conference context

Our shared standards are a means of resolving disputes and building bridges

"How resilient are Europe's democracies?" - asked Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland in his 2017 report on the "State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law"<sup>2</sup>, - "Europe remains, in many parts of the world, a beacon of democratic progress. Today, however, many of our societies appear less protective of their pluralism and more accepting of populism [...]. Balanced discussion gives way to polarised, us-versus-them polemic, making it harder for members of society to find common ground [...]. The European Convention of Human Rights founder fathers understood that our best security policy is one which stops our societies from descending into xenophobia, aggressive nationalism and disregard for democratic institutions[...]. Our shared standards are a means of resolving disputes and building bridges, whether between governments or communities".

Education plays an important role in strengthening the resilience of democratic societies. This is why the Council of Europe supports cooperation among its member states, which have a lot of good practice in the area of education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE), and can learn a lot from each other. Based on this cooperation, legal texts are developed and adopted, and serve as a common framework of reference.

### Common European standards on citizenship and human rights education

In 2010 the Council of Europe member states adopted the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education<sup>3</sup> (the Charter) in the framework of the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7. The Charter is a milestone setting a common European standard in this area. It is the only international legal document which makes explicit reference to both EDC and HRE. It has a strong role to play both with respect to informing policy making and as a practical tool for the promotion of learning democracy and human rights.

---

<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe (2012), *Democracy and human rights start with us: Charter for all*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-for-all](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-for-all)

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe (2016), *The State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law - A security imperative for Europe*, Report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, <https://rm.coe.int/1680646af8>

<sup>3</sup> Council of Europe (2010), *Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education: Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 and explanatory memorandum*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education)

The Charter establishes the principle that the member states “provide every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education”<sup>4</sup> and not only to their citizens. As Deputy Minister Jaroslav Fidrmuc (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic) pointed out in his address to the conference participants, the adoption of the Charter represented “a significant shift into how the themes are defined in the member states, how they are enshrined in the curriculum documents of most states...”<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, today there is a growing consensus in the Council of Europe member states that citizenship and human rights education “is not about adding more on top to what educational systems must do, but rather about *doing things differently*.”<sup>6</sup>

In 2016-2017 the Council of Europe organised a review of the implementation of the Charter, which resulted in a Report on the “State of citizenship and human rights education in Europe” and a Conference “Learning to live together: Shared commitment to democracy - The future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe”.

### The state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe: taking stock

In 2016, 40 countries responded to the survey on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe, organised by the Council of Europe Education Department. In preparing their responses, the governments consulted a broad range of partners. Feedback from civil society organisations, including youth organisations, was also collected directly by the Council of Europe Youth Department through an online survey, with almost 100 responses received from 44 countries. The results of these two surveys were summed up and analysed in the Council of Europe Report on the State of citizenship and human rights education in Europe, which took stock of the current achievements and put forward priorities for action. At the invitation of the Council of Europe, a number of persons provided their feedback on the conclusions of the Report.

### The future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe: looking forward

The Conference on “The future of citizenship and human rights education in Europe” brought together over 400 participants, including representatives of public authorities in charge of education and youth, National Human Rights Institutions, international institutions, education institutions, education professionals, including youth workers and trainers, as well as representatives of civil society and media from forty five out of the forty seven Council of Europe member states.

The aim of the conference was to explore how the Charter can be further strengthened as an effective support tool for building democratic societies based on respect for human rights.

---

<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe (2010), *Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education: Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 and explanatory memorandum*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, [www.coe.int/en/web/educ/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education](http://www.coe.int/en/web/educ/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education)

<sup>5</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/jaroslav-fidrmuc-welcome-address-conference-june-2017/168072cf79>

<sup>6</sup> Council of Europe (2017), *Learning to live together, Report on State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe, in accordance with objectives and principles of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, p. 80 [www.coe.int/en/web/educ/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe](http://www.coe.int/en/web/educ/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe)



The participants discussed how the conclusions of the Report related to their own experiences; shared examples of good practice; and proposed recommendations for future action. The outcomes of this discussion were then captured in the “Declaration, Key Actions and Expected Outcomes on Education for democratic citizenship and human rights”. The present report provides an overview of the conference discussions, based on the structure of the above-mentioned Declaration, and provides substantial clarification on the rationale behind the actions and outcomes that it contains.

## Joining forces across the sectors, within the organisation and with other partners

The Conference was organised by the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Directorate General of Democracy (DG II), in cooperation with the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP), Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law (DG I), which supports the Council of Europe member states in implementing the European Convention on Human Rights at the national level. The conference was organised following the guidance from an inter-sectorial preparatory group on the evaluation of the implementation of the EDC/HRE Charter, which brought together representatives of the European Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE), the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) and experts on education for democratic citizenship and human rights in formal and non-formal education settings.

Several parallel meetings were organised on the margins of the conference, including the 6th meeting of the International contact group on citizenship and human rights education<sup>7</sup>, a meeting on the EU/Council of Europe cooperation programme “Human rights and democracy in Action”, and a meeting of national human rights institutions (organised by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, Council of Europe and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions). The participants from youth NGOs met the day before and the day after the conference, with a view to coordinate their contribution to the conference, and to discuss the follow up actions, at a separate meeting organised by the Council of Europe Youth Department.

## Political impetus from the ministerial conference and call for action from youth organisations

This conference was part of the follow-up to the conclusions of the 25<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Education (Brussels, 11-12 April 2016), which called for the development of a long-term strategy for a more coherent and comprehensive approach to education for democratic citizenship and human rights at European level, highlighting the “importance of education in preparing young people to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow’s societies”.<sup>8</sup> The ministers also called for an improved use of existing

---

<sup>7</sup> The International Contact Group on citizenship and human rights education was set up in 2011 with a view to ensure close co-operation among regional and international initiatives in this field. It brings together the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR), the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Council of Europe. Further information: [www.coe.int/icg](http://www.coe.int/icg)

<sup>8</sup> Council of Europe (2016), *Final Declaration of the 25th Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education*, [www.coe.int/en/web/education-minister-conference](http://www.coe.int/en/web/education-minister-conference)

instruments, tools and resources developed over the past decade by Council of Europe expert bodies in Education and in other relevant sectors such as Youth; and to consider ways of increasing the impact of such resources and of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

The conference also builds on the discussions at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Compass Forum on Human Rights Education “Learning equality - living dignity”, organised within the framework of the Estonian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers (Budapest, 5-7 October 2016). The participants called on the Council of Europe member states to implement fully the Charter, to take a leading role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goal on inclusive and equitable quality education for all, and to put in place transparent mechanisms for reviewing and evaluating the Charter with a systematic involvement of youth organisations<sup>9</sup>.

### European contribution towards the UN 2030 Education Agenda

The above-mentioned review organised in the framework of the Charter was also part of the Council of Europe’s contribution towards the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education and the UN 2030 Education Agenda (Target SDG 4.7) which establishes: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”<sup>10</sup>. The indicator of that achievement will be the extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment.

As UNESCO’s Director-General Irina Bokova points out in her written feedback on the Council of Europe Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe: “This goal embodies a new vision of education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - to advance human rights, empower citizens, bolster social inclusion and resilience, and mobilise innovation for sustainable development. Education must be about learning to live in a world under pressure and advancing new forms of cultural literacy based on respect and equal dignity. It is about connecting the dots between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development”<sup>11</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> *The 3rd Compass Forum on Human Rights Education “Learning equality - living dignity”: Message to the Council of Europe* (2016) <https://rm.coe.int/16806acdfc>

<sup>10</sup> Target 4.7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4, in the United Nations 2030 Agenda <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>

<sup>11</sup> Council of Europe (2017), *Learning to live together, Report on State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, p. 41 [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe)

## B. Putting learners at the centre of education: Findings, discussions and recommendations

The Council of Europe Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe<sup>12</sup> was prepared based on a survey of governments (which was conducted with participation of a wide range of stakeholders) organised by the Education Department, and a direct survey for civil society organisations organised by the Youth Department. As Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, pointed out in her opening address, the Report "...provides us with an insight on how democracy and human rights have been promoted in Europe"<sup>13</sup> and highlights the Charter as an effective tool in the promotion of human rights and democracy through education.

Between 2012 and 2016 substantial progress was made in the 40 countries which responded to the survey for governments; many countries took concrete measures in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Charter, and the Charter is available in the language(s) of 38 countries<sup>14</sup>. The feedback received also highlights that Council of Europe's presence encourages stronger action and increases opportunities for cooperation. The Report points out the areas where further improvement is required and identifies priority areas for action.

According to the Report, across Council of Europe member states, "education is increasingly recognised as a tool for tackling radicalisation leading to terrorism, for successfully integrating migrants and refugees and for tackling disenchantment with democracy and the rise of populism. International cooperation in education for democratic citizenship and human rights is growing, supporting national approaches by raising standards and allowing states to learn from each other's experiences. But despite this growing understanding of the relationship between education and Europe's overall democratic health, challenges remain. In many countries [...] citizenship and human rights education are not sufficiently mainstreamed. In some areas of learning, such as vocational training, they are often absent. Where they are present, in many cases not enough is being done to monitor their impact, meaning that they do not receive sufficient priority, with resources geared instead towards areas of education that are evaluated and ranked"<sup>15</sup>.

The conference participants discussed the conclusions of the report and the issues that it generated. The diversity of experiences, viewpoints and perspectives shared at the conference provide useful background for the implementation of the Council of Europe Programme of Activities 2018-2019. The key outcomes of this discussion were captured in the Conference Declaration entitled "Declaration, Key Actions and Expected Outcomes on Education for democracy and human rights", issued at the end of the conference.

The present conference report is structured along the ten key actions recommended in the Conference Declaration.

---

<sup>12</sup> Council of Europe (2017), *Learning to live together, Report on State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe)

<sup>13</sup> Gabriella Battaini Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Opening Speech at the Conference, 20 June 2017 <https://rm.coe.int/gabriella-battaini-dragoni-conference-june-2017/168072cf02>

<sup>14</sup> Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe: Report analysis tool (2017) [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/2016-report-analysis](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/2016-report-analysis)

<sup>15</sup> Council of Europe (2017), *Learning to live together, Report on State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, p. 5 [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe)

## I. POLICY

**Key Action 1:** Include education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in national, regional and local policy and practices in formal and non-formal education including youth work.

### a) Issues raised in the Report on the State of citizenship and human rights education in Europe

The report highlighted that a) the trends across the education domains of explicitly referencing EDC/HRE in laws, policies and objectives are in decline, b) there is a slight decline in the number of countries reporting revisions of EDC/HRE related policies; and c) there is a considerable gap between education policies and education practice, with 66% of the government respondents reporting such inconsistencies (this is a much higher percentage than in the first review cycle organised in 2012<sup>16</sup>).

While a majority of government respondents reported that a high priority was given to EDC/HRE at the national level, this perception was not shared by civil society actors, who were less aware of measures taken to promote EDC/HRE. In fact, civil society actors mention the lack of priority among decision-makers as the biggest challenge for EDC/HRE implementation (89% compared to only 47% in 2012) along with a lack of a coherent youth policy strategy in many cases.

### b) Issues raised at the conference

#### Bridging the gap between policy and practice

The participants stressed that in order for EDC/HRE to be given greater priority in the member states, it is important to increase the awareness of how EDC/HRE can help in addressing current challenges in European societies. Furthermore it was pointed out that in order to be effective EDC/HRE related policies should be:

- a) inclusive: formulated through participatory and transparent processes;
- b) cross-sectorial: anchoring other relevant policies; not only between the non-governmental and governmental sectors but also between the ministries, local authorities, educational institutions and school stakeholders;
- c) cross-regional;
- d) evidence and knowledge-based: good practices and relevant research should inform decision making.

---

<sup>16</sup> This 2nd review cycle draws on the lessons from the first exercise in 2012, which consisted of a report and a conference 'Democracy and Human Rights in Action – Looking Ahead. The impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education' organised in Strasbourg on 28-29 November 2012 in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Wergeland Centre. Further information: [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/edc/hre-conference-2012](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/edc/hre-conference-2012)

Other issues discussed included the following:

- a) the formulation of EDC/HRE policies should be followed by the implementation of coherent long-term strategies, action plans and programmes;
- b) translating policies into practice takes time, sufficient financial resources, coordinated long-term approaches, adequate teaching and learning resources, systematic assessment and evaluation, and teacher preparation and support;
- c) effective implementation also requires an understanding of and enthusiasm for EDC/HRE among decision makers, educators, parents, students and civil society actors;
- d) there is a need to develop and strengthen a shared understanding of how EDC/HRE principles are translated into policy and practice in the member states.

### Working together more effectively in complex political context

The influence of the volatile political landscape on long-term commitment towards EDC/HRE was also raised by the participants. It was pointed out that EDC/HRE programmes are developed and put into practice in a concrete political climate with ever-changing local needs, shifting focus and inconsistent allocation of resources, which pose many challenges for civil society actors and for long-term planning. The participants stressed the urgent need to improve communication channels between policymakers and civil society. More effective ways of working together will help raise awareness of EDC/HRE initiatives, maximising their potential benefits and sustainability.

### Need for stronger action from the Council of Europe

The participants highlighted the emerging need for stronger political action from the Council of Europe. They felt that the added value of the Council of Europe is in its ability to provide guidance on vision-related goals and expected outcomes about substantive issues (e.g. focusing on EDC/HRE tackling anti-democratic developments across Europe). International organisations, they argued, have the possibility to steer agendas at a high level, to set political priorities, and encourage political commitment. Furthermore, the participants discussed the need to be more explicit on how EDC/HRE can assist educational institutions in fulfilling their mission to provide quality education, which is closely connected to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4). SDG4 clearly states that human rights and global citizenship are key aspects of quality education for all and the Council of Europe member states have committed to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda.

### Consulting and involving children and young people

Many participants stressed the importance of effectively involving youth, children's and students' organisations when developing policies, especially those affecting them, in line with international human rights standards and principles such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Council of Europe Recommendation on the participation of children and young people<sup>17</sup>. It was pointed out that decision makers should spend more time with children and young people in order to understand them better and to represent their interests in relevant policies accordingly. The importance of providing feedback on

---

<sup>17</sup> Council of Europe (2012) Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18 [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805cb0ca](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805cb0ca)

relevant consultations was also mentioned, including an explanation of how various proposals were taken into account or why they could not be taken into account. It was concluded that such participation lies at the very heart of education for democratic citizenship and human rights, and should be *sine qua non* of the education policy in this area.

#### Examples of Practice:

➤ The Czech National Parliament of Children and Youth (NPDM, “Národní parlament dětí a mládeže” in Czech) is an umbrella body for children and youth parliaments in the Czech Republic. Members of this Parliament are elected representatives from the regional and local Parliaments of Children and Youth. The NPDM is the superior structure of participation under which representatives of children and youth gather, discuss and negotiate<sup>18</sup>.

➤ Other good practices are documented in the publications entitled “Youth Participation: Good Practices in Different Forms of Regional and Local Democracy”<sup>19</sup> and “Human rights education in action: Practices of human rights education with and by young people”<sup>20</sup>.

#### Providing a space for practicing democracy and human rights: the whole school approach

With respect to the whole school approach (also referred to as whole institution approach in higher education) the participants discussed the role of schools as an arena for all students to openly address issues related to living together in and outside the classroom, and stressed that the school should provide a space where democratic competences can be developed. The importance of appropriate training for educators, school heads and other stakeholders - all working together for a common goal – was also underlined. It was pointed out that the whole school / whole institution approach implies multi-disciplinary cooperation and openness for bottom-up decision-making processes and student-centred learning. It was concluded that it is essential that this approach is promoted through relevant policy provisions.

#### Example of practice

➤ In Lithuania, the Ministry of Education introduced in 2015 the “Concept of Good School”, which serves as a guideline to schools on how to improve education quality<sup>21</sup>. It is addressed to all interest groups: pupils, teachers, parents, school leaders and school authorities, and the general public. The concept aims to support the development of the “basic skills that make it possible to become civic-minded, humane, cherished members of society and to successfully plan personal and professional life”. Each school is given the opportunity to choose which aspects of the school's activities it wants to improve first, and to build up a

<sup>18</sup> Czech National Parliament of Children and Youth [www.npdm.eu/](http://www.npdm.eu/)

<sup>19</sup> Finnish youth research network (2014), *Youth Participation: Good Practices in Different Forms of Regional and Local Democracy* [www.nuorisotutkimusseura.fi/images/julkaisuja/youthparticipation\\_goodpractices.pdf](http://www.nuorisotutkimusseura.fi/images/julkaisuja/youthparticipation_goodpractices.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Council of Europe (2017), *Human rights education in action: Practices of human rights education with and by young people* <https://rm.coe.int/2017-hre-in-action/168072bcd7>

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Education and Science of Lithuania (2015), *The Good School Initiative (Geros mokyklos noncapital)*, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/f2f65120a7bb11e5be7f919a1e5be>

school improvement path based on self-assessment, school community needs and agreement. In accordance with the Concept, an assessment of the quality of school activities and an external evaluation are carried out to help determine whether the school is moving towards good school in a targeted manner, progress is being made, and which areas of activity need the greatest impetus.

## Recommendations

### To member states

- Develop National Action Plans where human rights issues and human rights education are mainstreamed.
- Promote effective and transparent participatory approaches in policy making, including all key stakeholders in relevant processes.
- Support whole school / whole institution approach with policy measures, which embed EDC/HRE into the institution's ethos.

### To National Human Rights Institutes (NHRIs)

- Promote the development, implementation and assessment of EDC/HRE policies and National Action Plans ensuring the inclusion of multiple stakeholders.

### To civil society actors:

- Invest time in advocacy, including lobbying to keep EDC/HRE on the agenda as a priority for policy making.

### To the Council of Europe

- Give priority to policy level guidance.
- Set the agenda and influence the bigger picture of EDC/HRE in Europe.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION

Key Action 2: Ensure quality and balanced provision of citizenship and human rights education in all areas and types of education, with specific attention paid to areas where EDC/HRE is less present such as pre-school education, vocational education and training, and higher education.

### a) Issues raised in the Report:

Over a third of government respondents stated there are scarce or non-existent references to education for democratic citizenship and human rights in laws, policies and strategic

objectives, in vocational education and training, and higher education (14 out of 40 respondents). "In Higher Education, we need to connect education for human rights and democracy to the academic field of each discipline, teaching our students how to use the knowledge they are seeking and developing for the good of all members of society..."<sup>22</sup> pointed out Chiara Patricolo and Helge Schwitters, European Students' Union, in their comments on the report.

## b) Issues raised at the conference

### Ensuring quality provision at all levels of education

The participants highlighted the need to enhance a balanced provision of EDC/HRE at all levels, in a lifelong learning perspective, through common standards and approaches and link it to the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC). They recalled that the inclusion of EDC/HRE at all levels of education is an important means of addressing intolerance and discrimination that undermine society and contribute to exclusion and alienation. While the participants agreed that more attention needs to be given to EDC/HRE in vocational education, pre-school education and higher education (where they are currently less present), it was strongly emphasised that EDC/HRE efforts in primary and secondary schools (general education) must not be relegated to the second rank priority, as it would constitute "the wrong political message not to include EDC/HRE in entire educational sectors"<sup>23</sup>.

### Start early: giving priority to pre-school education

The participants emphasized the need to recognise Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) also called "pre-school education" as an important arena for democratic citizenship. Kindergarten does not follow fixed curricula so there is more flexibility to introduce EDC/HRE principles. The following needs for further work were discussed:

- a) bridging homes (parents/guardians), schools/early childhood institutions, community and governments, to develop better understanding and cooperation;
- b) nurturing democratic culture, based on human rights values and an enabling environment, where modelling is an important part of the learning experience (sensitivity and respect for children's views and contributions); and
- c) training of parents, educators and other professionals; and
- d) developing materials (for educational as well as lobbying purposes).

### Combining professional skills with education for democracy in vocational education and training

The participants felt that in vocational education and training the "values education" dimension (with space for EDC/HRE) is often modest compared to the training on specific skills; it seems to have less focus on students as democratic citizens. It was suggested that a

---

<sup>22</sup> Council of Europe (2017), *Learning to live together, Report on State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, p. 50 [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe)

<sup>23</sup> Director General Snezana Samardžić-Marković, Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe, Opening session, 20 June 2017, <https://rm.coe.int/ssm-closing-remarks/168072be4c>



systematic and long-term approach towards EDC/HRE in vocational education and training should cover legislation, curriculum development, teacher training and research and evaluation. It was pointed out that in many countries vocational education and training is not under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education; therefore awareness of the importance of EDC/HRE should be raised among the Ministry of Labour or other public authorities where vocational education and training is placed. It was suggested that EDC/HRE pedagogy should be adjusted to the context of the vocational education and training system. For instance, it could be linked to learning about rights and responsibilities of an apprentice in the world of work. It was suggested that experiences and methodologies from the youth sector could be of help for this purpose.

#### Examples of practice

- Arbeit und Leben (Unions and evening schools)<sup>24</sup> and the AdB project group (Germany) produced a tool called “Inputs and methods on EDC with young people in the world of work”<sup>25</sup>.
- The “Vision Human Rights Culture” Project aims to introduce human rights into the technical curricula of vocational schools and further education teacher training of “Human Rights Ambassadors”.<sup>26</sup>

#### Strengthening public engagement of higher education

The participants felt that EDC/HRE is closely connected to the democratic mission of higher education institutions (HEI), also called “public engagement” or the “social mission” of HEI: educating future generations to be active members of their societies. The participants suggested that while academic freedom and institutional autonomy must always be protected, they should not be considered as impeding EDC/HRE. On the contrary, they should open possibilities for new ways of providing such education. The participation of students in higher education governance was mentioned on several occasions as an essential element of the development of democratic citizenship. Some participants raised a concern that participation in student elections is usually rather low, and suggested that it would be important to analyse the reasons for this lack of student engagement. It was also proposed that students’ participation should be more multifaceted, including university outreach activities, humanitarian work, and intercultural experiences. The participants recommended that all partners, including senior members of the academic community, should promote the whole-institution democratic culture.

---

<sup>24</sup> Arbeit und Leben (Unions and evening schools), [www.arbeitundleben.de](http://www.arbeitundleben.de)

<sup>25</sup> Über ARBEITen! Impulse und Methoden für die arbeitsweltbezogene politische Jugendbildung“ [www.adb.de/download/publikationen/AdB\\_Broschu%CC%88re\\_Arbeitswelt\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.adb.de/download/publikationen/AdB_Broschu%CC%88re_Arbeitswelt_WEB.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Vision Human Rights Culture Project, [www.biat.uni-flensburg.de/humanrights/default.htm](http://www.biat.uni-flensburg.de/humanrights/default.htm)

## Examples of practice

- The FREE University Berlin offers a Master programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship (“Demokratiepaedagogik”). The MA focus among others on democratic school development and development of social competences<sup>27</sup>. Enabling factors for successful implementation of the EDC/HRE perspective in higher education in Germany include the autonomy guaranteed in legislation in the highly decentralised system, where universities take an active role in the public debate, and are encouraged to engage in partnerships with other socially engaged actors.
- In Georgia EDC/HRE learning modules were introduced at 7 HEIs, resulting from the EU/Council of Europe Joint Project “Promoting Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship Education in 6 Eastern Partnership countries”<sup>28</sup>.
- “Together, Moving Forward”<sup>29</sup> is a small grants programme run by European Students’ Union (ESU) aiming at building positive refugee-host interactions across Europe. ESU published a study on recognition of qualifications held by refugees and their access to higher education in Europe<sup>30</sup>. With the Refugees Welcome Map campaign, EUA aims to showcase and document the commitment of higher education institutions and organisations in supporting refugees.

## Recommendations

### To the member states:

- Strengthen the provision of EDC/HRE in primary education, vocational education and training and higher education.
- Encourage institutional leadership to give a higher priority for the civic mission of HEI.

### To higher education institutions

- Give a higher priority for the civic mission of HEI
- Promote EDC/HRE beyond the traditional disciplines (e.g. law, political science, education) through a whole institution inter-disciplinary approach, as well as co-creation of knowledge and collaborative curriculum design.
- Support training of academic staff to promote integration of the EDC/HRE perspective in their teaching and research.

<sup>27</sup> Master programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship (“Demokratiepaedagogik”), <http://degede.de/masterdemokratiepdagogik0.0.html>

<sup>28</sup> Presentation on “EDC/HRE Case of Georgia”, [http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/eap-pcf/news-education/-/asset\\_publisher/uPpvuaq7Z5dH/content/regional-conference-on-supporting-democratic-school-culture-in-the-eastern-partnership-countries-?inheritRedirect=false&redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fpjp-eu.Council%20of%20Europe.int%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fnews-education%3Fp\\_id%3D101\\_INSTANCE\\_uPpvuaq7Z5dH%26p\\_p\\_lifecycle%3D0%26p\\_p\\_state%3Dnormal%26p\\_p\\_mode%3Dview%26p\\_p\\_col\\_id%3Dcolumn-1%26p\\_p\\_col\\_count%3D1](http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/eap-pcf/news-education/-/asset_publisher/uPpvuaq7Z5dH/content/regional-conference-on-supporting-democratic-school-culture-in-the-eastern-partnership-countries-?inheritRedirect=false&redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fpjp-eu.Council%20of%20Europe.int%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fnews-education%3Fp_id%3D101_INSTANCE_uPpvuaq7Z5dH%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-1%26p_p_col_count%3D1)

<sup>29</sup> “Together, Moving Forward” Programme, [www.esu-online.org/?project=together-moving-forward](http://www.esu-online.org/?project=together-moving-forward)

<sup>30</sup> European Students’ Union (2017), *Refugees welcome? Recognition of qualifications held by refugees and their access to higher education in Europe – country analyses*, Brussels, [www.esu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ESU-Are-Refugees-Welcome\\_-WEBSITE-1.c.compressed-1.pdf](http://www.esu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ESU-Are-Refugees-Welcome_-WEBSITE-1.c.compressed-1.pdf)

- Encourage student organisations to stimulate the participation of all other actors in the academic community in participative policy, practice and governance in higher education institutions.
- Follow more efficiently the recommendations of the European University Association and ESU regarding the participation of students in governing bodies.
- Enhance cooperation among higher education institutions, with a view to support institutions under political pressure.

To civil society organisations:

- Advocate for EDC/HRE to be included more prominently in pre-school education, vocational education and training and higher education.
- Contribute expertise towards capacity building programmes and activities.
- Contribute towards relevant consultation processes.

To the Council of Europe

- Support cooperation activities on EDC/HRE in vocational education and training, including sharing of good practices, developing resources, research & evaluation.
- Work with other organisations and associations active in vocational education and training (CEDEFOP, ETF) and link this work explicitly to the UN 2030 agenda (SDG 4.7 on global citizenship).
- Facilitate the development of indicators on EDC/HRE in vocational education and training, based on parity of learning opportunities for EDC/HRE in vocational education and training and general education.
- Extend the reference to higher education and research in the Charter.
- Set up an alliance among international institutions to promote EDC/HRE in higher education.
- Establish a collaborative expert network of researchers and academics whose work is informed by EDC/HRE principles.
- Support the development of European wide civil society networks (with participation of employers and trade unions).

Key Action 3: Recognise the value and strengthen the capacity of education professionals and educators in civil society, empower them through training and other support.

a) Issues raised in the Report

Although EDC/HRE can address many of the current challenges in society, it cannot be seen in isolation from the broader environment and the social, economic and political context which influences people's values and attitudes. Therefore, there is an important shared responsibility for many actors in our societies to contribute towards positive social change.

The report shows a substantial change from 2012<sup>31</sup> to 2016, as the degree of cooperation and support for civil society organisations has decreased in 20% of countries. Community and youth organisations in particular have been affected by the reduction of economic support. The NGO survey findings show that the level of recognition of work done by civil society organisations in an increasingly complex and difficult environment, is perceived as non-existent by 41 % of the respondents.

#### b) Issues discussed by the participants at the conference

##### Making “learning to live together” a priority for the professional development of all educators

The need for systemic, ongoing and consistent support for professional development for educators (working in formal and non-formal settings) was frequently pointed out in the discussions. It was argued that not all educators are prepared to use participatory methodology, which is essential for delivering quality EDC/HRE. The inclusion of EDC/HRE in pre-service teacher training was considered crucial in order to reach all future teachers. It was also mentioned that research findings show that continuous professional development as part of the institutional policy is far more effective than one-off training events for individual staff members. The participants addressed the need to provide opportunities for capacity building across borders, arguing that international cooperation opens perspectives for addressing both local needs and global challenges. Many participants argued for the need to promote teacher’s autonomy, including appropriate organisational changes and development of appropriate curricula. The participants discussed the need to develop quality educational resources for teachers, which could be adapted for use in various contexts, and suggested that the Council of Europe should have a leading role with respect to the areas where few materials are currently available. Many participants felt that the issue of training of educators was not sufficiently prominent in the Report, and should be given more prominence in future reviews.

##### Nurturing meaningful involvement of civil society: full partners in education

It was pointed out in the discussion that while many civil society organisations played a role in EDC/HRE<sup>32</sup>, the level of governmental support for EDC/HRE civil society actors was rather limited. It was suggested that provision of training for parents and administrative school staff, for youth workers and youth leaders, as well as for other key partners in education needs to be substantially increased. The participants highlighted the importance of recognition of civil society organisations as full partners, and of ensuring their meaningful involvement in the process of monitoring and evaluating implementation of EDC/HRE. Finally, it was also suggested that youth-led EDC/HRE, which responds to issues of interest to young people, is an area that should be further explored.

---

<sup>31</sup> This 2nd review cycle draws on the lessons from the first exercise in 2012, which consisted of a report and a conference ‘Democracy and Human Rights in Action – Looking Ahead. The impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education’ organised in Strasbourg on 28-29 November 2012 in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Wergeland Centre. Further information: [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/edc/hre-conference-2012](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/edc/hre-conference-2012)

<sup>32</sup> These include, but are not limited to youth organisations, student organisations, teacher associations, trade unions, parents’ associations, and other groups or individuals in the education, youth and other fields.

## Examples of practice

- The European Youth Forum has collected examples of citizenship education provided by youth organisations ranging from volunteering, international exchange/events and conferences, local youth work, training workshops, thematic projects, summer programmes, to manuals, publications, advocacy and awards<sup>33</sup>.
- National training courses on Internet Media Literacy were organised by civil society organisations in Portugal. These courses for teachers were developed in cooperation with the Council of Europe No Hate Speech Movement, on the basis of the Council of Europe Publication “Bookmarks”<sup>34</sup>, and are part of a broad range of activities related to the NHSM campaign.
- The aim of the project “United youth against violent extremism in Europe”<sup>35</sup> is to provide to youth trainers’, youth activists’ and young people at risk of social exclusion skills to act against violent extremism and hate speech, fostering young people’s active participation, promote social cohesion and increase a sense of European citizenship. This initiative is a partnership activity organized by HREYN – Human Rights Education Youth Network, UNITED for Intercultural Action, EYP – European Youth Press and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

## Recommendations

### To the member states:

- Acknowledge the contribution of the formal, non-formal and informal education to the promotion of human rights and democracy through education.
- Include in the budgets support for pre-service as well as in-service training on EDC/HRE for all areas and types of education.
- Recognise civil society organisations as full partners.
- Strengthen support mechanisms for civil society organisations (including youth organisations) to share resources on EDC/HRE.
- Make available sufficient and long-term financial support (based on actual needs) to NGOs providing quality EDC/HRE.
- Make available training opportunities for civil society educators.
- Encourage and support schools in strengthening their co-operation with civil society and developing extra curricula EDC/HRE activities.

### To the National Human Rights Institutions:

- Carry out capacity building for educational authorities, civil servants and other actors.

<sup>33</sup> European Youth Forum (2016) *Inspiring! Youth organisations contribution to citizenship education*, Brussels, [www.youthforum.org/assets/2016/10/Youth-organisations-contribution-to-citizenship-education.pdf](http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2016/10/Youth-organisations-contribution-to-citizenship-education.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> No Hate Speech Movement in Portugal, [www.odionao.com.pt/](http://www.odionao.com.pt/)

<sup>35</sup> United Youth against Violent Extremism [www.unitedagainstracism.org/projects/united-youth-against-hate-and-violent-extremism-in-europe/](http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/projects/united-youth-against-hate-and-violent-extremism-in-europe/)

- Make use of the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) in training activities.

To higher education institutions

- Promote research on the benefit of involvement of civil society organisations in delivering EDC/HRE, with a view to facilitate “evidence based dialogue”.

To civil society organisations:

- Motivate teachers to use EDC/HRE approaches and assist with methodology.

To the Council of Europe

- Encourage networking between educators from civil society and educators from the formal sector.
- Encourage member states to recognise the contribution of civil society organisations to EDC/HRE in formal and non-formal education settings.

### III. CO-OPERATION

Key Action 4: Strengthen the commitment of, and co-operation, co-ordination and shared ownership between public authorities, national human rights institutions and civil society, including through public debate and consultations involving, amongst others, youth and student’s organisations, in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practices regarding EDC/HRE.

a) Issues raised in the Report:

Broader opportunities for cooperation, networking and exchange of expertise are required for addressing both local needs and global challenges. The NGOs survey stressed the need to give greater priority to supporting cooperation with NGOs, including youth organisations, in the field of EDC/HRE at national level. Cooperation between governments and EDC/HRE actors is perceived as moderate by about 50% of respondents. More needs to be done to share and learn from examples of existing practice. With respect to international co-operation, the report shows a considerable increase in the number of countries that are having or planning international cooperation activities (from 45% to 73%), to a great extent through participation in EU or Council of Europe driven initiatives. At the same time the current opportunities for such cooperation do not meet the existing demand.

b) Issues discussed by the participants at the conference:

Strengthening co-operation between public authorities and civil society

As a conference participant expressed: "In this moment in time, with so many challenges, it makes more sense to work together than to work apart". The need to develop strategies and set up or improve sustainable mechanisms for cooperation of a broad range of stakeholders - "partners in education" - was extensively discussed. The participants suggested that the Council of Europe and its' member states should support national and regional networks of stakeholders, with a view to raise the quality and improve the accessibility of EDC/HRE. They were convinced that involvement of a broad range of actors (including local authorities) is likely to enhance the impact of EDC/HRE. The need to bridge homes (parents/guardians) and schools/early childhood institutions with communities and government agencies was also mentioned as a prerequisite for a quality EDC/HRE. It was proposed that in conflict areas, NGOs and youth organisations can help reach the "invisible children", for instance through online tools, where public authorities have difficulties to do so. In such situations coordinated efforts are more likely to produce better results.

#### Example of practice

➡ Equal partnership was a key to success for the "Somos" initiative, which organised by the Lisbon City Hall in co-management with NGOs. Programme Somos was launched with the aim to develop a human rights culture in the city through training and awareness raising actions involving citizens and non-governmental organisations in Lisbon under the slogan "We are the rights that we have". The programme has about 2000 beneficiaries yearly and is supported by a network of multipliers trained together with youth organisations.

#### Building broader and deeper partnerships between formal, non-formal and informal education

Several participants highlighted that reinforced cooperation between non-formal, informal and formal education can help improve the quality of EDC/HRE. Relevant activities can be organised in cooperation with youth associations and schools, thus providing opportunities for experiential learning and personal development for young people. The participants found that civil society organisations often develop user-friendly and effective EDC/HRE tools, which can be relevant for teachers and other professionals in formal education. They proposed that tools from the formal sector can be promoted to trainers, youth workers and others in non-formal education in activities co-organised with national authorities. It was suggested that EDC/HRE themes can provide space for non-formal education methods and approaches in a formal education setting. There is therefore a substantial potential for schools and youth associations to build broader and deeper partnerships.

#### Examples of practice

➡ In Serbia, NGOs and national authorities cooperate in providing trainings to schools in citizenship education.

☞ Estonia's "Interesting School" initiative by the Ministry of Education and Research sends a clear joint message by the state (authorities and educators) and the public (parents, school benefactors, etc.) that attending school is and must be interesting, that developing student's curiosity is important, and that schools must be creative.<sup>36</sup>

### Creating more opportunities for sharing experience

Many participants considered that more opportunities should be given to different stakeholders for working across borders and exchanging experiences. They stressed that international cooperation programmes (which can take form of traineeships, online platforms, distant and blended e-learning approaches) should meet the needs of the countries. It was pointed out that mobility of students and staff is another important element of international cooperation, as relevant programmes promote contacts among people of different origin and background, and are very suitable for promoting EDC/HRE

### Example of practice

☞ The EU-Council of Europe Joint Programme "Human Rights and Democracy in Action" supports cooperation between 3-8 countries with a view to explore a topic of common interest, collect and analyse data and produce practical tools for use in the education systems of the participating countries<sup>37</sup>.

☞ Amnesty International's "Human Rights friendly schools" programme supports schools and their communities to build a global culture of human rights.<sup>38</sup>

☞ ERASMUS + is an EU program which promotes student and educator mobility, reform of existing overlapping structures and greater cooperation in the field of education with non-EU countries. It is intended to all European students, trainees, teachers, trainers and youth. Up to 5 million persons will benefit from EU subventions for getting education or training experience abroad between 2014-2020.<sup>39</sup>

### Promoting stronger cooperation among intergovernmental institutions

The participants suggested that cooperation in the area of EDC/HRE should be further encouraged among international institutions, such as EU, Council of Europe, OECD, OSCE/ODHIR, UNESCO and the UN OHCHR, aiming at streamlining policy documents, exchanging information and promoting synergies. It was also pointed out that the work of the Council of Europe on EDC/HRE needs to be closely and explicitly connected to the UN 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>36</sup>Initiative "Huvitav Kool" (Interesting School) by the Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia [www.hm.ee/en/huvitav-kool](http://www.hm.ee/en/huvitav-kool)

<sup>37</sup> EU-Council of Europe Joint Programme "Human Rights and Democracy in Action" <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/charter-edc-hre-pilot-projects>

<sup>38</sup> Amnesty International Human Rights Friendly Schools [www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/human-rights-friendly-schools/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/human-rights-friendly-schools/)

<sup>39</sup> EU program ERASMUS + [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)



## Recommendations

### To the member states:

- Involve civil society (including youth sector) and NHRIs in the implementation of EDC/HRE strategies, which should encompass a long-term perspective (not just ad hoc consultations).
- Allocate sustainable financial resources to cooperation among relevant partners.

### To national human rights institutions

- Develop technical support (e.g. digital platforms, input into EDC/HRE curriculum).
- Connect national work on HRE with regional and international mechanisms (e.g. different human rights mechanisms, UN SDGs, World Programme for HRE).

### To civil society organisations:

- Build sustainable partnerships with other organisations active in EDC/HRE.

### To the Council of Europe

- Encourage and support dialogue between government and civil society.
- Facilitate cooperation among international institutions.
- Promote synergies with other cooperation programmes of other international institutions (for example through possible EDC/HRE partnership with the Erasmus Plus programme, which has several strands relating to human rights).
- Support the NHRIs by raising awareness of their existence, role, expertise and competences in EDC/HRE.

## IV. ACCESS, VISIBILITY AND RELEVANCE

Key Action 5: Ensure access to EDC/HRE, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups, including young people who are not in education or training.

### a) Issues raised in the Report

There were substantial discrepancies between the responses from the NGOs and from the government with respect to the main obstacles to EDC/HRE. While the government respondents pointed out the lack of interest and support from education professionals, media and the public as the main challenges to the promotion of EDC/HRE, civil society organisations emphasised the lack of political will, lack of priority and commitment on the part of decision-makers. While all government respondents said that they took concrete measures to promote citizenship and human rights education, only 30% of the respondents were aware of such measures. The issue of access to EDC/HRE is touched upon by some of

the contributors to the report: “Schooling systems need to promote dialogue and a shared vision of human rights and democracy for all learners” points out Felisa Tibbitts, Chair of Human Rights Education at Utrecht University, Netherlands in her comments<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, the report points out that the political, social and economic context influence people’s values, beliefs and attitudes and EDC/HRE reforms are most effective when they are a part of comprehensive strategies for social change.

b) Issues discussed by the participants at the conference:

#### Ensuring access for marginalised and vulnerable groups

The participants stressed the need to ensure access to EDC/HRE for all social groups, including the economically disadvantaged, migrants and refugees. It was suggested that local and national authorities should ensure such access in particular for young people who are not in education or training, and young people living in rural and isolated areas, with the use of both formal and non-formal education programmes.

#### Making full use of the new technologies

The participants highlighted that in a digital era, learners should be reached via the communication channels that they use in their everyday life and that emphasis on harnessing the digital media opportunities should be embraced. They felt that it was important to reflect on the use of social media for purposes of advancing human rights and democratic principles (the digital dimension of EDC/HRE), as well as on their use for anti-democratic purposes (and possible remedies to address such use).

The participants pointed out that it is of interest to connect EDC/HRE to critical issues in social media and public life, and to demonstrate the benefits of the EDC/HRE pedagogy, which fosters critical analysis of society, encourages personal reflections on one’s values and strengthens motivation to apply EDC/HRE principles to everyday life. It was mentioned that youth associations are often very experienced with the use of social media and can provide support for older generations in gaining access to digital tools. It was highlighted that online training tools allow the users to choose the time and content of the training in accordance with their needs and that they enable a proactive exploration of context, approaches and dilemmas of human rights protection thanks to the interactive features such as interviews and chats.

#### Examples of practice

➡ The European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) supports the Council of Europe member states in implementing the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) at the national level. A wide range of training resources on the ECHR, developed and collected under the HELP Programme, is available on-line, translated into the

---

<sup>40</sup> Council of Europe (2017), *Learning to live together, Report on State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, p. 55 [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe)<

national languages of the beneficiary countries. When using the courses of the HELP Programme<sup>41</sup>, users can choose the content, which is most relevant to their specific field of interest.

➔ Amnesty International offers free online courses (MOOCS) on human rights, which are accessible throughout the world.<sup>42</sup>

## Recommendations

### To the member states:

- Ensure access to EDC/HRE activities for all learners.
- Improve accessibility of EDC/HRE materials for vulnerable groups (e.g. braille, audio, easy-to-read versions) and children and young people who are not in education or children and young people from isolated areas.
  - Improve accessibility of online training and education tools for disabled persons and elder generations.
  - Promote the use of existing online tools for addressing discrimination, bullying and intolerance.
  - Support the development of the online training tools that are more personalized and include real life stories.
  - Expand the target audience of online training programmes to local and state officials, university students, social workers and other groups of professionals.

### To the National Human Rights Institutions:

- Monitor the inclusion of vulnerable groups in EDC/HRE strategies, including capacity building.
- Involve representatives of vulnerable groups in the NHRIs EDC/HRE activities.

### To civil society organisations:

- Make use of alternative and diverse channels and tools (e.g. exhibitions, YouTube videos) to reach as many people as possible and make EDC/HRE accessible to all levels of society, particularly those that are vulnerable and marginalised.

### To the Council of Europe

- Encourage member states to ensure access to EDC/HRE for economically disadvantaged people, migrants and refugees
- Facilitate exchange of good practices and lessons learned, help to build networks of partners working on this issue, support research and raise awareness.
- Promote the use of indicators that measure who have been reached and encourage de-segregation of data in EDC/HRE evaluations.

<sup>41</sup> HELP programme of the Council of Europe [www.coe.int/en/web/help](http://www.coe.int/en/web/help)

<sup>42</sup> Amnesty International – MOOCS: [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2016/06/six-free-online-courses-to-learn-more-about-human-rights/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/education/2016/06/six-free-online-courses-to-learn-more-about-human-rights/)

Key Action 6: Increase the visibility of the Council of Europe Charter on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education amongst all current and potential stakeholders, including examples of how it can be implemented, through awareness-raising, advocacy, relevant policy measures, capacity building and other targeted initiatives.

a) Issues raised in the Report

The Report recalls that the Charter is an international legal document, which expresses the commitment of the Council of Europe member states to “providing every person within their territory with the opportunity of citizenship and human rights education”. According to most respondents the present review process is perceived as an encouragement for stronger action and as a support tool for further development of policy and practice. The Charter is available in almost all countries in the official language but many do not have the translated versions in minority languages. The dissemination is done mostly online through Ministries’ websites. At the same time, the Charter is not well known in the countries. For example, about 80% of the civil society respondents claim that young people in their countries have limited or no knowledge of the charter. While the promotion of the charter is not an aim in itself, its endorsement by the Council of Europe member states through a unanimous adoption in 2010, as well as its appreciation by civil society organisations, make it a powerful tool for lobbying, advocacy and policy dialogue. Its’ broader dissemination and promotion are therefore essential and need to be supported.

There was a mixed feedback concerning the usefulness of Council of Europe resources and materials, which are extensively used in some countries and largely unknown in the others. Many respondents reported that it is difficult to know how these materials are used due to the general lack of relevant monitoring and assessment tools and/or due to decentralized systems.

b) Issues discussed by the participants at the conference

Developing deeper understanding and sharing practical examples

The participants considered that the objectives of the Charter need to be re-interpreted by each country or institution within their own context. They felt that examples of good practice would help to demonstrate how the principles of the Charter are put into practice, as well as how the Council of Europe tools can be used to promote the values of democracy and human rights in different educational settings. It was also pointed out that conducting qualitative studies in the member states would help to develop a deeper understanding of the current situation and possible ways forward. It was also proposed that the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture can be very useful for putting into practice the objectives and principles of the Charter. The participants suggested that the relationship between CDC and the implementation of the Charter should be further clarified.

## Facilitating a more inclusive and participatory review process

The Charter implementation reviews aim to strengthen sustainability and raise the quality of EDC/HRE in formal and non-formal educational contexts. In this context, participants highlighted the need to include all stakeholders in a more transparent and participatory manner in the review process. It would also be important to support participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in this exercise. Capacity building of education professionals is a major issue in most countries; it should be given more attention in the next review process of the Charter, together with a selected number of priority areas for further development, such as gender mainstreaming in education.

## Improving relevance and adaptability of the Council of Europe materials

The following challenges for use of Council of Europe materials were mentioned in the discussion: lack of available translations; insufficient relevance to local and national realities; some tools are already outdated (need to update with CDC framework for instance); and new tools are needed for the emerging priority areas (e.g. pre-school education and vocational education and training). The discussions revealed the need to design tools which are adaptable and can easily be contextualised. Several participants highlighted the importance of adapting the Council of Europe materials to the existing curricula and training systems.

### Example of practice

- ➡ In Ukraine, a new EDC/HRE manual was developed based on the Council of Europe materials, which have been amended in order to fit the Ukrainian reality and to meet the requirements of the curriculum reform to develop democratic competences in 12 different subjects from 5th till 9th grades<sup>43</sup>.
- ➡ The Council of Europe “Living Democracy” manuals for teachers, which include high-quality lesson materials and introduce EDC/HRE in an interactive way, are available in many languages and have been successfully adapted for use in different countries.<sup>44</sup>

## Reinforcing advocacy efforts

In several sessions the participants stressed the need to strengthen the political commitment towards EDC/HRE and to reinforce advocacy efforts. It was highlighted that international organisations’ declarations and legal documents as well as compilations of good practices and surveys / reports are very important advocacy tools, which can help to draw the attention of policy-makers to the importance of EDC/HRE.

---

<sup>43</sup> Civic responsibility: 80 exercises for developing citizenship and social competences in 5-9 grades - a manual developed within the Schools for Democracy Programme for Ukrainian secondary schools, [www.theewc.org/Content/Home/News/New-manual-from-the-Schools-for-Democracy-in-Ukraine](http://www.theewc.org/Content/Home/News/New-manual-from-the-Schools-for-Democracy-in-Ukraine)

<sup>44</sup> Council of Europe, Living Democracy Manuals for Teachers: [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/living-democracy-manuals](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/living-democracy-manuals)

## Recommendations

### To the member states:

- Support the development of qualitative studies which would provide a deeper analysis and improved understanding of the translation of the commonly agreed EDC/HRE principles and objectives (as defined in the Council of Europe Charter) into education policy and practice.
- Support adaptation, translation and dissemination of the Council of Europe materials (in cooperation of civil society).

### To the civil society:

- Use, disseminate and promote Council of Europe materials on EDC/HRE.
- Provide feedback on the Council of Europe materials.
- Share good practice on the use of the Council of Europe materials.

### To the Council of Europe

- Provide an online databank of EDC/HRE materials.
- Update existing resources in accordance with the CDC framework. .
- Clarify the relationship between CDC and the Charter.
- Develop a mapping system with criteria for good practices.
- Develop new educational resources in EDC/HRE, including in digital format, especially in areas that are less developed (e.g. vocational education and training).

Key Action 7: Collect and promote examples of learning practice illustrating the relevance of citizenship and human rights education to everyday life, with particular attention given to the experiences of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

### a) Issues raised in the Report

Country respondents have identified the following challenges as salient for the promotion and development of EDC/HRE, according to their medium to high impact: i) lack of media interest and support (73% of respondents), ii) lack of awareness/interest/support among education professionals (78%), iii) lack of public interest and support (73%).

## b) Issues discussed by the participants at the conference

### Connecting effectively to the concerns of the ordinary people

It was pointed out at the conference that in the globalisation era, when so many people feel “left behind”, those defending and promoting democracy and human rights are sometimes perceived as acting in the interests of the elites. It was suggested that it is essential to connect EDC/HRE effectively to the concerns of the ordinary people, and to pay particular attention to the needs of people who are in vulnerable situation, and whose inclusion and sense of dignity need to be restored. As a participant expressed it: “if we do not focus on the *losers of democracy* we risk losing democracy altogether”.

Many participants felt that the use of abstract terminology in EDC/HRE can be difficult to understand and to relate to for the wider public. There was an agreement that it is crucial to make the case for human rights and democratic values not as an abstract ideology or legalistic concepts, but relevant because “they are about things that concern everyone” as the Council of Europe’s “Charter for All” points out. It was suggested that the language used needs to be more accessible and adapted for different age groups and different local and regional contexts. The participants also stressed the importance of using “first-hand life experiences” in EDC/HRE, in particular from persons belonging to the marginalised groups. Along with giving a voice to people in vulnerable situations, this would encourage empathy among the majority population, by giving human face to what might be seen initially as abstract human rights issues.

In conclusion, the participants highlighted the need to re-think communication strategies and to redefine human rights in more pragmatic terms, without losing sight of their normative base. The Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) was mentioned as an important step towards bringing these topics closer to teachers’ practice, and demonstrating how democratic and human rights values relate to our everyday life.

### Dealing with controversial issues: safe spaces

It was mentioned in the discussion that everyday life is surrounded by controversy and that schools need to lay the groundwork on how to deal with it. In an age of increased uncertainty, schools need to help build resilience and to provide opportunities for personal “meaning-making” in relation to burning societal problems. “Schools (should) feel confident in teaching sensitive issues. Not theologising or passing on the official view, but providing balanced information and creating spaces for respectful and reasoned discussion. Especially at a time when young people can access such vast amounts of information on the Internet, much of it misleading”<sup>45</sup>. It was pointed out that in order to create “safe spaces” it is important to equip education personnel and school managers with relevant competences; teaching and managing needs to be linked, be both proactive and reactive and be effectively embedded in the school context. It was also emphasised that anti-radicalisation programmes in place in many countries must not undermine the trust and open public debate within education institutions and must not work against the core values and principles of EDC/HRE.

---

<sup>45</sup> Deputy Secretary General Gabriella Battaini Dragoni, Council of Europe Conference, Cyprus, March 2017

## Example of practice

☛ The Council of Europe/EU Controversial Issues Pack was mentioned as a good example of relevant adaptable material available in several languages. The Ministries of Education of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland are currently cooperating in a capacity building project on “Teaching Controversial issues”<sup>46</sup> based on these Council of Europe-EU materials, run by The European Wergeland Centre. Another project on the same topic is being supported by the Ministries of Education of the Baltic countries<sup>47</sup>.

## Recommendations

### To the member states:

- Develop an awareness raising campaign to show the added value of EDC/HRE approaches and the relevance to everyday life to the wider public (such as the No Hate Speech Campaign).

### To civil society organisations:

- Collect and disseminate good practice illustrating the relevance of EDC/HRE for addressing current challenges.

### To the Council of Europe:

- Raise awareness of the relevance of EDC/HRE for addressing current challenges, in particular by providing training for: a) decision makers in charge of education policy and practice; b) governments officials in a position to advocate for EDC/HRE in the member states; c) and civil society representatives.
- Be more creative in demonstrating how EDC/HRE works in practice, support the member states and other partners in developing their own solutions, and disseminate innovative practices.
- Provide guidance as how to collect and disseminate good practice.

## V. ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Key Action 8: Consistently integrate EDC/HRE in curricula, and develop appropriate programme and process evaluation and assessment tools.

---

<sup>46</sup> Teaching Controversial Issues in the Nordic Countries [www.theewc.org](http://www.theewc.org)

<sup>47</sup> Baltic countries Baltic Partnership for EDC/ HRE: <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/charter-edc-hre-pilot-projects/baltic-partnership-for-human-rights-education-and-education-for-democratic-citizenship>, [www.humanrightsestonia.ee/balti-inimoigushariduse-koostooprojekt](http://www.humanrightsestonia.ee/balti-inimoigushariduse-koostooprojekt)



#### a) Issues raised in the report

The respondents pointed out the difficulty of finding the right balance with respect to integrating EDC/HRE in the curricula while avoiding a curriculum overload and ensuring that educators are appropriately trained. As highlighted by the Greek respondent: "The key challenges identified by the new curricula and instructional approaches pertain to giving the relevant courses a more active learning approach through the use of a wide spectrum of materials and methods". Moreover, the respondents suggested that political context influences substantially support for EDC/HRE and the initiation of review cycles. In general, the curriculum revision and development process was deemed inclusive and participatory by the respondents. In many countries this process was not exclusively related to EDC/HRE, but was part of a broader reform. It should be noted that in most countries a variety of stakeholders took part in the process such as groups or committees of experts, NGOs, teacher associations and student councils. The survey suggested that there is a need to establish effective and durable criteria for evaluation of EDC/HRE programmes, and to develop appropriate assessment tools.

#### b) Issues discussed by the participants at the conference

##### Fostering consistent presence of citizenship and human rights education in curricula

There was consensus among the participants on the need to give EDC/HRE a stable position in the curricula, thus reinforcing its position and transcending political changes. It was pointed out that curricula should allow for critical exploration of political and social realities and support students in participating actively in their societies. It was stressed that education professionals, students and civil society should be involved in all phases of curriculum development (design, piloting, implementation and review). It was suggested that sharing good practices on EDC/HRE can be of help for many countries that are undergoing curricula reforms. The participants advocated the need to move from a content-led teaching practice to creating a learning environment where learners are able to learn what they need to know. It was also recommended that the member states should take advantage of the independent position of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), in and involve them in curricula development, monitoring and evaluation, as well as provision of advice to government, parliament and responsible education authorities.

##### Example of practice

- The Croatian Comprehensive Curricular Reform (2014-2016) was stopped halfway, following the change in priorities of the new government. This abandonment led to a public campaign "Croatia can do better!"<sup>48</sup>.
- In the latest policy reform process in Denmark, human rights education was included in the obligatory parts of three subjects ("History", "Civic education and social science", and "Health, sexuality and family") and guiding parts of other subjects. The Danish National

<sup>48</sup>Campaign "Croatia can do better!", <http://euroclio.eu/voice/croatia-can-better>

Human Rights Institute had a central role in the process.

## Mainstreaming citizenship and human rights education in the evaluation and assessment

The participants pointed out that it is important to differentiate between assessment and evaluation as follows: assessment is the systematic measurement of the degree of proficiency achieved by the learner and evaluation is the systematic measurement of the effectiveness of the educational system or programme (assessment can be used as one element of the evaluation). There was consensus among the participants that in order to improve practice it is important to analyse what works, to adapt EDC/HRE strategies accordingly and to allocate sufficient resources to evaluation and assessment. It was also pointed out that cross-sectorial cooperation is essential for developing effective evaluation.

The participants discussed the following challenges with respect to the assessment tools: a) such tools are not intended to measure changes over longer periods of time; b) media, family and peers play an important role in the development of such competences, and it is difficult to identify the specific influence of the formal education; c) any “values education” is a sensitive area, and it is always important to clarify explicitly the purpose of the assessment. The participants highlighted that if democratic competences were assessed in the ways that are suitable for this type of education, this would help reinforce the status of EDC/HRE within the education systems. The participants stressed the need to identify, promote and use common criteria for assessment in formal and non-formal settings, and suggested that CDC can provide very useful input and clarification for this discussion. It was pointed out that it will be important to understand how the CDC criteria and recommendations relate to the countries’ policies and practices, and how they can be of help for the development of assessment tools.

### Recommendations

#### To the member states:

- Develop flexible competence-based curricula.
- Address teachers’ overload and promote teachers’ autonomy.
- Involve education professionals, students, civil society organisations and NHRIs in all phases of curriculum development (design, piloting, implementation and review).
- Promote the understanding that EDC/HRE is an ongoing process that should be constantly reviewed and improved.
- Allocate resources to the development of baseline studies mapping the extent and quality of national EDC/HRE strategies.
- Include quantitative and qualitative approaches in the evaluation of EDC/HRE programmes.

#### To civil society organisations:

- Contribute to EDC/HRE curriculum development and review.

#### To the Council of Europe

- Make available a package of practical materials for curriculum development,

evaluation and assessment that are readily accessible in different languages.

- Facilitate a coalition of like-minded organisations working on EDC/HRE curriculum reform, including the use of existing or new online platforms.
- Map existing practices on EDC/HRE programme evaluation from different levels (local, regional, national and international) and from formal and non-formal education.
- Develop quality criteria / indicators for EDC/HRE which can be applied consistently throughout Europe.

Key Action 9: Make full use of the available data and support systematic evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the EDC/HRE programmes.

a) Issues raised in the report

Only over a half (55%) of the respondents stated that evaluations of strategies and policies undertaken in accordance with the aims and principles of the charter had been carried out or were foreseen. A more coherent and consistent approach is required to the assessment of progress in the area of EDC/HRE. The replies received from the respondent countries show that collecting information from various actors is often difficult owing to the lack of established channels for such communication and to the data not being collected on a regular basis. On the other hand, the evidence suggests that including perspectives of different stakeholders is essential for the development of EDC/HRE. It enhances shared ownership and commitment, contributes to improved quality and strengthens effectiveness. Citizenship and human rights issues and approaches need to be explicitly included in ongoing evaluations of education policy and practice and there should be effective ways of pooling such information from different sources.

b) Issues discussed by the participants at the conference

Providing evidence of what works

The participants acknowledged the existence of substantial difficulties with respect to evaluating the effectiveness of EDC/HRE. However, they agreed that such evaluation is both desirable and possible. It was pointed out that there is a need to collect data in a systematic way in order to provide evidence which can inform policy, to show what works and how it works, and to demonstrate how EDC/HRE can help address the challenges that our societies are facing today. It was pointed out that demonstrating the effectiveness of EDC/HRE would help improve its visibility, raise its' priority and increase funding. The participants discussed the need to specify measurable indicators of impact of EDC/HRE programmes while recognising that not all results will lend themselves to such measuring ("when it is difficult or

impossible to measure something, it does not necessarily mean that it is not important”). It was highlighted that cooperation among different stakeholders is paramount. Researchers, higher education institutions and NGOs can have an important role in evaluating the impact of EDC/HRE programmes and disseminating the findings.

#### Example of practice

➔ The Swedish Schools Inspectorate produced a Quality Assessment Report on “Schools' work with democracy and fundamental values” (2012). The inspection had been conducted at both school and classroom level. The former concerned the overall communication climate in schools, including the head teachers' responsibility to ensure that there is a comprehensive view and a common policy in the handling of questions related to democracy and fundamental values. The latter concerned the discussion climate in the classroom and the teachers' responsibility for how the democratic mission and fundamental values are integrated into the teaching of individual subjects<sup>49</sup>.

➔ Human Rights Education is one of the strategic priorities for Amnesty International in this Strategic Goals period 2016 – 2019. Amnesty developed a unified reporting system and measurement framework to monitor and communicate progress in human rights education. The understanding of human rights education, approaches and bodies of work vary from region to region, from country to country. The measurement framework with a quantitative dashboard and a qualitative achievement scale enables the organisation to communicate Amnesty's human rights education work worldwide with one voice<sup>50</sup>.

#### Recommendations

##### To the member states:

- Develop consistent and systematic approaches to the evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of EDC/HRE.
- Make full use of the data available data for policy making and implementation.
- Involve civil society organisations in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of EDC/HRE.

##### To civil society actors:

- Support the development of indicators allowing comparing the EDC/HRE situation and assessing progress across the member states.
- Contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of EDC/HRE.

##### To the Council of Europe:

- Facilitate the development of standards, criteria, indicators through dialogue among

<sup>49</sup> Skolverket (Swedish National Agency for Education) [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se) ; Quality Assessment Report on “Schools' work with democracy and fundamental values” [www.skolinspektionen.se/globalassets/0-si/01-inspektion/kvalitetsgranskning/demokrati/quality-assessment-report-democracy-and-fundamental-values.pdf](http://www.skolinspektionen.se/globalassets/0-si/01-inspektion/kvalitetsgranskning/demokrati/quality-assessment-report-democracy-and-fundamental-values.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Amnesty International Human Rights Education Programme [www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education](http://www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education)

the countries, based on what the countries have (or should have) in common.

- Develop quality standards for EDC/HRE with special emphasis on learner-centred approach, connected to the CDC framework. Such standards can help support the evaluation, monitoring, and sharing of information on quality EDC/HRE practices.
- Develop tools to analyse and disseminate data on effectiveness of EDC/HRE programmes.
- Engage with human rights mechanisms (ex. UN HR Periodical Review) in monitoring evaluation of HRE programmes in schools and higher education institutions.
- Link to international measurements that are under development in relationship to the UN Agenda 2030 (SDG 4.7).

Key Action 10: Develop partnerships with higher education institutions, research institutions and other relevant organisations to develop and promote research in this area.

#### a) Issues raised by the Report

Country respondents indicated that although there has been support for research carried out by independent organisations there is a lack of coherent approach in this area, with limited funding available.

#### b) Issues discussed by participants at the conference

##### Promoting policy dialogue

The discussion addressed the purposes and status of research in the area of EDC/HRE; the need for greater dialogue between researchers and policy-makers; cooperation between researchers and research users; challenging political contexts; the need to distinguish more carefully between evaluation and research and to recognise areas of complementarity; concerns about the limitations of government-funded evaluation programmes to assess the effectiveness of EDC/HRE; how research in the formal sector of education can inform practices in youth work and how research in youth work can inform practices in the formal sector; research frameworks/theories and the need for intersectionality; research dissemination; and the role that the Council of Europe can play in enabling and disseminating research.

##### Addressing imbalances and raising visibility of research

Some participants felt that most educational initiatives (at least in the formal sector) are geared towards political rights and responsibilities, and tend to downplay the importance social and economic rights. In the current climate where distrust of political actors is high, research can help identify ways of addressing such imbalances and of tailoring education

programmes to the needs of the students more effectively. It was also pointed out that there is a growing demand for research into the ways in which young people are drawn to antidemocratic and extremist ideologies. EDC/HRE would receive more visibility if there was a stronger research base on its potential for the prevention of violent radicalisation. Research that is premised on intersectionality (recognising learners' multiple identities and power differentials in society) is critical and could do much to strengthen EDC/HRE.

### C. Viewpoints: Promoting human rights and democracy through education in Europe today

In order to put the conference in a broader context, three speakers were invited to share their perspectives on promoting human rights and democracy through education in Europe today, from the point of view of academics, teachers and civil society: Mr Kishore Singh, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Ms Haldis Margrete Holst, Deputy General Secretary, Education International and Ms Natalia Chardymova, Director, Academy of Innovation, Russian Federation.

Mr Kishore Singh highlighted inequality and discrimination as a key challenge. He called on the participants to contribute to the UN 2030 Education Agenda for inclusive society, which covers humanistic values which are also included in the Council of Europe Charter and in the EU Paris Declaration on promoting Citizenship Education. Furthermore Mr Singh pointed out that privatisation of education, particularly at the higher education level, is a serious challenge. "Education must be a common good, – concluded Mr Singh, - we must give more importance to social justice and equity in education. These are key pillars for the United Nations".

Ms Haldis Margrete Holst pointed out that while human rights are a part of a mission of being a teacher, the values of democracy are contested in many parts of the world. She felt that this gave Council of Europe a special mission to put democracy on the agenda, including in education. She stressed that to protect democracy one has to know about his/her responsibility to stand up for others. In conclusion, Ms Holst also raised the issue of privatisation of education, which in her view often leads to simplifying complex issues (which are costly to teach): "Complexity is essential for understanding the views of other people and for learning to live together with people who are different from us, and must therefore be safeguarded".

Ms Natalia Chardymova shared her views on the challenges that civil society representatives are facing in promoting human rights education. She pointed out that sometimes they might feel that "their hands are tied" and they might conduct self-censorship because "fear prevents them from acting in a meaningful way". Ms Chardymova suggested that the Charter could be used for advocacy of human rights education, as a set of guiding principles and that it "can help to open doors". In conclusion, she pointed out that "human rights education community is growing thanks to the work of civil society organisations and thanks to the work of the Council of Europe".



## D. International institutions' perspective: Supporting progress towards common objectives on citizenship and human rights education

On the last day of the conference representatives of the European Commission, EU Fundamental Rights Agency, OECD, OSCE/ODIHR, OHCHR and UNESCO discussed current challenges and future priorities, and their respective roles in the area of citizenship and human rights education. It was highlighted that the main role of international institutions is to steer the agenda, to set political priorities and to encourage political commitment, as well as to support peer learning among the member states. The speakers stressed that it is essential to collect and analyse data (at national and international level), in order to feed evidence into decision making. It was also pointed out that "the most important monitoring takes place in the classroom".

The speakers underlined that formal and non-formal education should work together in this area and mutually reinforce each other. They stressed that taking into account multiple perspectives is essential for sound democratic societies, and that civil society plays an important role in giving voice to different groups of people. It was suggested that "populism is a consequence of lack of citizenship and human rights education" and an expression of frustration with the inequalities and injustices produced by globalisation. The discussants pointed out that globalisation can also help develop solidarity and cooperation. They suggested that demonstrating how education can be used to address the current threats to democracy and human rights can help draw the attention of decision makers to the importance of citizenship and human rights education.

It was highlighted in the discussion that it is important to reach out "beyond the limited circles", to use new technologies and to promote innovation. The speakers pointed out that learning is changing radically in today's world, and it is important to look ahead and to adapt relevant strategies. It was concluded that "Today we need dialogue - more than ever - with those who see the world differently. We need to take a hard look at the "blind spots" and reconsider our approaches".

## E. Conference Closing Remarks

### Message of support from the Committee of Ministers

In the closing session, Maria Esther Rabasa Grau, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Andorra to the Council of Europe, presented a number of observations on the Conference from her perspective as a Chair of the Committee of Ministers Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment. In particular, she pointed out the following:

- Education for democratic citizenship and human rights play an important role for promoting the "living together" in dignity and mutual respect, which is one of the most important current challenges in Europe today.



- There is consensus among the member states on a number of important principles, which are enshrined in the Charter, as well as in other important texts adopted by the Committee of Ministers such as the Recommendation on ensuring quality education (CM/Rec (2012)13) and Recommendation on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education (Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12).
- As the Report on the State of citizenship and human rights education shows a lot has been achieved, but a lot still remains to be done. The Conference provided a good opportunity for sharing experiences and good practices and for reflecting on how the Charter's principles could be put into practice more effectively, including with the help of the Reference framework of competences for democratic culture, which was launched by the Andorran Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2013.

#### Beyond the conference: next steps

The Council of Europe Director General for Democracy Snezana Samardžić-Marković also provided her feedback on the main points highlighted at the conference. In particular, she reflected on where the Council of Europe's action can be of most help for the member states, and proposed the following avenues:

- The Council of Europe needs to look at how the standards set by the Charter can be further developed in different areas. The CDC Framework of Competences is a good example of a potential new vehicle, as are the new Committee of Minister's recommendations in the youth field. It is essential to strengthen the countries' ownership of these instruments.
- In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the Charter review takes place every five years. Between these fixed points, Council of Europe needs to work closely together with the member states and other partners in order to improve the way quality is defined and the information is collected and analysed. It is crucial to involve all key actors from formal and non-formal education sector in this work, as their confidence in the quality of Council of Europe action is crucial for sustainability and impact.
- With respect to cooperation and support, the Council of Europe will continue to ensure that the principles behind EDC/HRE, and the practical measures required to promote its integration into formal and non-formal education, are in turn integrated into Council of Europe capacity-building programmes in the education and youth sectors, which are offered to public authorities or civil society, including in many cases directly to young people.
- The Council of Europe is convinced that a systematic and standards-based dialogue with the member states is the best way forward and it is committed to improving the quality of such dialogue. Likewise, the Council of Europe is aware of the need to

support the recognition of the role of civil society, including youth organisations.

The Council of Europe Secretariat will submit the recommendations from the conference to relevant Council of Europe committees, with a view to translate them into action in the framework of the cooperation programme 2018-2019.

Final thought: education for democracy and human rights is the best investment in our future

To conclude, I would like to recall the words of Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who wrote in his comments on the Council of Europe Report: "...We should never consider human rights and democratic citizenship as "optional extras" or routine obligations - they are vital undertakings to sustain social cohesion, promote inclusion and participation and prevent violence and conflict in our societies. They are an investment in our present and in our future which we cannot afford to overlook"<sup>51</sup>.

---

<sup>51</sup> Council of Europe (2017), *Learning to live together, Report on State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, p. 40 [www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe](http://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe)